

REMARKS

This Amendment is filed in response to the Office Action dated May 18, 2006. This application should be allowed and the case passed to issue. No new matter is raised by this amendment. The amendment to claim 2 corrects an informality noted by the Examiner.

Claims 1-24 are pending in this application. Claims 11-24 were withdrawn pursuant to a restriction requirement. Claims 1-10 have been rejected. Claim 2 has been amended.

Election of Species

Applicants respectfully request rejoinder and examination of the claims of Species (b) (claims 11-19) upon the allowance of a claim from Species (a).

Objection to the Specification

The specification was objected to because related applications were described without sufficient identification. This objection is traversed, and reconsideration and withdrawal thereof respectfully requested.

The specification has been amended to identify the related applications by their U.S. Application Serial Nos.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite because the term "other" appears to be confusing when used in a Markush group. This rejection is traversed, and reconsideration and withdrawal thereof respectfully requested.

Claim 2 has been amended to delete the term "other."

Applicants assert that the claims fully comport with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Shimizu et al. (U.S. Pat. Pub. No. 2002/0160232) in view of Selwyn et al. (U.S. Pat. Pub. No. 2006/0048893). This rejection is traversed, and reconsideration and withdrawal thereof respectfully requested. The following is a comparison between the invention, as claimed, and the cited prior art.

An aspect of the invention, per claim 1, is a method of manufacturing granular perpendicular magnetic recording media comprising sequential steps of providing a non-magnetic substrate including a surface. A layer stack is formed on the surface of the substrate. The layer stack includes a granular perpendicular magnetic recording layer having an exposed upper surface. A plasma is generated containing at least one ionized oxygen species derived from a source gas comprised of a compound of oxygen and at least one other non-metallic element. The exposed upper surface of the granular perpendicular magnetic recording layer is treated with the plasma to form an oxidized surface layer.

The Examiner asserted that Shimizu et al. discloses a method of manufacturing granular perpendicular magnetic recording material. The Examiner acknowledged that Shimizu et al. do not disclose the plasma containing at least one oxygen species derived from a source gas comprised of a compound of oxygen and at least one other non-metallic element. The Examiner asserted that Selwyn et al. discloses oxygen plasma reaction and that it would have been obvious to include such because of the advantages taught by Selwyn et al.

The combination of Shimizu et al. and Selwyn et al. do not suggest the claimed method because Selwyn et al. cannot be relied on as prior art to the claimed method. Selwyn et al. has a

filing date of May 11, 2005, whereas the present application was filed November 6, 2003. Thus, Selwyn et al. is not prior art.

Though, Selwyn et al. is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Ser. No. 10/208,124 (the '124 application), the '124 application does not suggest generating a plasma containing at least one ionized oxygen species **derived from a source gas comprised of a compound of oxygen and at least one other non-metallic element**, as required by claim 1.

Therefore, Selwyn et al. is not prior art, and the combination of Shimizu et al. and Selwyn et al. does not suggest the claimed method.

The instant claims are further distinguishable over Shimizu et al. and Selwyn et al. because there is no suggestion to combine Shimizu et al. and Selwyn et al., as averred by the Examiner. Shimizu et al. is directed to depositing an oxidized surface layer, while Selwyn et al. is directed to ashing (removal) of a layer. Shimizu et al. and Selwyn et al. are directed to opposite functions. Shimizu et al. teaches depositing layers and Selwyn et al. teaches removing layers. Thus, Shimizu et al. and Selwyn et al. are directed to non-analogous arts. One of skill in the art looking to solve a problem involving deposition of an oxide surface layer would not look towards the teaching of Selwyn et al. involving removal (ashing) of layers.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that this application should be allowed and the case passed to issue. If there are any questions regarding these remarks or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated to expedite the prosecution of the application.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper,

Application No.: 10/701,418

including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

McDERMOTT WILL & EMERY LLP

B. P. Codd Reg. No. 51,321

h Bernard P. Codd
Registration No. 46,429

600 13th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20005-3096
Phone: 202.756.8000 BPC:kap
Facsimile: 202.756.8087
Date: August 18, 2006

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as our correspondence address.**